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Fifth Report

**COMMUNIST VIOLATIONS OF
THE VIETNAM AND LAOS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS**

(This report covers the week from
16 March through 22 March 1973)

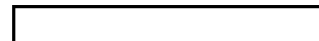
*This memorandum has been prepared jointly by the
Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense*

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23 March 1973

Fifth Report

COMMUNIST VIOLATIONS OF
THE VIETNAM AND LAOS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS*

(This report covers the week from
16 March through 22 March 1973)

The Key Points

- Only a small number of additional North Vietnamese personnel started the infiltration trip south during the week, and all were civil or military specialists. The much larger number of infiltrators already in the pipeline continued moving south.
- An additional North Vietnamese AAA regiment has begun to move into South Vietnam, and a newly occupied and operational SA-2 SAM site has been observed near Khe Sanh.
- An NVA infantry division apparently moved northward earlier this year from Quang Tri Province of South Vietnam to Ha Tinh Province of North Vietnam. We obtained evidence of this move only in the past several days.
- The flow of North Vietnamese military supplies into southern Laos increased somewhat over last week's level, but was below the level of several weeks ago. There was heavy NVA resupply activity inside South Vietnam in MR 1, and in the tri-border area.
- The number of combat incidents initiated by the Communists was at a moderate level in both South Vietnam and Laos.

* This report has been prepared jointly by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense.

The Details

NOTE: This is the fifth in a series of reports detailing recently received evidence of (a) Communist efforts to infiltrate new manpower and military materiel toward and into South Vietnam, and (b) Communist-instigated combat activity in violation of the Vietnam and Laos settlement agreements.

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A. Infiltration and Redeployment of North Vietnamese Personnel

1. Evidence received during the reporting period indicates that Hanoi is continuing to dispatch some North Vietnamese personnel southward toward and into South Vietnam. The apparently emerging trend of an overall reduction in infiltration starts which was noted last week, however, has continued. Only a small number of new infiltrators started the trek south during the week, and all of them were civil or military specialists. The last combat troops known to have entered the infiltration system started their journey south on 10 and 11 March. Nevertheless, there are currently about 20,000 North Vietnamese personnel still in the infiltration system moving south, and an additional 15,000 infiltrators who were in the system after 28 January have already arrived at their destinations. About half of the 20,000 still in the pipeline left their starting point in North Vietnam after the ceasefire date. There has been positive evidence that at least some of these infiltrators continued moving south after the President's statement of 15 March, and no evidence that any of them have turned back to the north.

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2. In addition to this infiltration flow, information received during the week also indicates that another North Vietnamese AAA regiment has begun to deploy into South Vietnam in violation of the settlement agreement. As of 21 March, [redacted]

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[redacted] this regiment, with at least 40 AAA weapons, had moved from the Laos panhandle to a location inside South Vietnam in southwestern Kontum Province. [redacted]

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[redacted] We cannot determine definitively that the regiment moved across the South Vietnamese border after the President's statement of 15 March. It must have moved, however, either in the few days just before or after the 15th. [redacted]

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[redacted] This brings the number of AAA regiments now located in South Vietnam to at least 15, with an estimated 900 guns.

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3. In a major development during the week, a newly occupied and operational SA-2 SAM site was observed in the Khe Sanh area of Quang Tri Province on 19 March. At the end of February and in the first few days of March, the North Vietnamese had set up three other SA-2 sites in the Khe Sanh area, but by 6 March--after strong complaints had been issued by the GVN and the U.S.--they had removed the equipment from these three sites. From then until 19 March, no more SA-2 missiles or missile-related equipment were observed inside South Vietnam, although there is no evidence that the North Vietnamese removed the missiles from the country. The three sites which were unoccupied as of 6 March are still unoccupied. The new site, however, is less than a kilometer away from one of the earlier three (now unoccupied) sites, and the missiles and equipment deployed at it could be the same missiles and equipment seen earlier at one or another of the other sites. Firm evidence shows that the new site had not been set up as of 10 March, and that the missiles were emplaced on it sometime between 10 and 19 March. As of 21 March

the missiles were still there and the site was still operational. (See paragraph 6 (i) for list of specific equipment observed at this new site.)

4. Newly received information provides evidence of a northward deployment which may have occurred earlier this year. This evidence indicates that one of the five North Vietnamese infantry divisions which we have been carrying in Quang Tri Province probably had begun to move back to North Vietnam by January 1973, and most elements of the division may have completed the move by late February. This would be the first NVA division known to have returned to North Vietnam since the start of the Communist spring offensive on 30 March 1972. If the division has moved with all of its personnel, it would reduce NVA combat forces in MR 1 by some 7,500 personnel. Other NVA combat forces still in the area--not including AAA units--total between 55,000 and 65,000 personnel.

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B. Movement of Military Equipment and Supplies by
The North Vietnamese Toward and Into South Viet-
nam and Laos

5. Heavy NVA resupply activity was observed during the week within northern South Vietnam, and the North Vietnamese in this area appear to be implementing the new transportation effort scheduled to run from 15 March through 31 May. (Under normal weather conditions, 31 May would be in the early stages of the rainy season.) Indications of logistic activity in the Laos Panhandle were less substantial than those received from South Vietnam, but did reflect a continuing drive to move supplies into the forward areas. Heavy activity was observed in the tri-border area and in northeastern Cambodia where NVA logistic units continued to move large quantities of supplies into central and southern South Vietnam. Within southern North Vietnam, some supplies continued to move southward, and moderately heavy cargo shipments are still moving to northern Laos. South-bound truck traffic through the entry corridors into

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southern Laos from North Vietnam increased somewhat above the level observed in the previous week, but was below the level noted in late February and early March immediately after the Laos settlement agreement was signed.

6. The following instances of Communist logistic activity were observed within South Vietnam during the period under review. Activity observed within South Vietnam probably reflects supplies which have recently entered the country. (The map on the following page shows the roads and route numbers which appear below.)

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- (a) On 17 March, good evidence indicates that 55 North Vietnamese cargo trucks delivered [redacted] cargo to several locations in northern GVN MR-1. It could not be determined whether these trucks had moved supplies from stockpiles outside the country or were merely transferring cargo from storage facilities within South Vietnam.
- (b) On 19 March, 50 trucks were observed halted on Route 922, north of the A Shau Valley within South Vietnam.

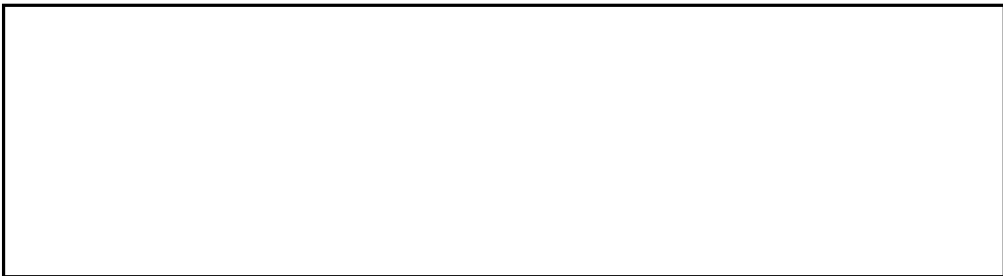
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- (d) On 19 March, a total of 7 new NVA storage areas were observed in the A Shau Valley. These facilities, all constructed since 24 February, contain as many as seven storage buildings each plus additional areas for open storage.

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- (f) In western Quang Tri Province, 35 trucks were observed traveling south and 35 north on 20 March through the operational area of one NVA logistic unit.
 - (g) On 20 March, 46 trucks were observed moving ammunition in one area of Quang Tri Province of South Vietnam. Again, it could not be determined whether or not these supplies had just come from North Vietnam.
 - (h) On 20 March, a ten-mile segment of a new road which must have recently been constructed by the Communists was observed in Quang Tin and Quang Ngai Provinces of South Vietnam, heading south from Route 534.
 - (i) A newly occupied SA-2 SAM site located in the Khe Sanh area has been confirmed. At the site are 2 SA-2 guideline missiles on launchers, 2 radar instruments, and 2 support vans. Firm evidence indicates that these missiles were emplaced sometime between 10 and 19 March.
 - (j) Recently received evidence indicates that as of 12 March the Communists had constructed a new section of road from the Mimot area of Cambodia into Tay Ninh Province of South Vietnam.
 - (k) On Route 1033 in the western DMZ, there were 72 cargo trucks observed moving south during the period 16 through 22 March.

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7. There were the following indications during the reporting period of North Vietnamese logistic activity in the Laos Panhandle and northeastern Cambodia. Historical precedent would suggest that much of this activity probably involves supplies destined for South Vietnam.

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- (b) On 16-17 March, an NVA logistic unit operating in the tri-border area was observed receiving 70 cargo vehicles and on 17 March dispatching 30 vehicles destined for South Vietnam.

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- (c) In eastern Laos, a convoy of 19 cargo trucks loaded with supplies was observed on 18 March on Route 922, 9 miles west of the Laos/South Vietnam border.
- (d) 188 cargo trucks were observed moving southward on Route 912 through the Ban Karai Pass during the period 16 through 22 March.

8. There is additional evidence of the continuing movement within North Vietnam of military and other supplies which are probably moving to South Vietnam and northern Laos.

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- (b) In possibly related activity in the Vinh area, 35 vehicles were observed picking up cargo at the Cho Si Railroad Station on 15 March and transporting it toward Muong Sen, on Route 7 at the border with North Laos.

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C. Combat Activity Instigated by Communist Forces In South Vietnam Since the Ceasefire

9. In South Vietnam, the total numbers of Communist initiated ceasefire violations reported by the South Vietnamese Armed Forces and the Joint Military Commission since 28 January and for the last week (16 March - 22 March) are shown below:

Military Region	Total Since Ceasefire		Last Week (16-22 Mar)	
	Level of Action		Level of Action	
	Major <u>1/</u>	Minor <u>1/</u>	Major	Minor
MR 1	615	2,217	48	155
MR 2	138	822	8	61
MR 3	167	1,307	26	140
MR 4	269	2,635	32	286
Totals	1,189	6,981	114 (173) <u>2/</u>	642 (749) <u>2/</u>

1/ DOD definitions of major and minor violations are contained in ANNEX IV.

2/ Denotes totals of previous week.

10. Some of these violations may have been initiated by GVN forces rather than Communist forces, and it is impossible in all cases to determine the actual instigator. The table above and the chart

on the following page, however, do show fairly accurately the trend in the amount of combat that has occurred in South Vietnam since the ceasefire. The fact that a combat incident occurred at a particular time and place is accurately reported by the South Vietnamese in most instances, even though the question of who started it may not always be treated in objective fashion.

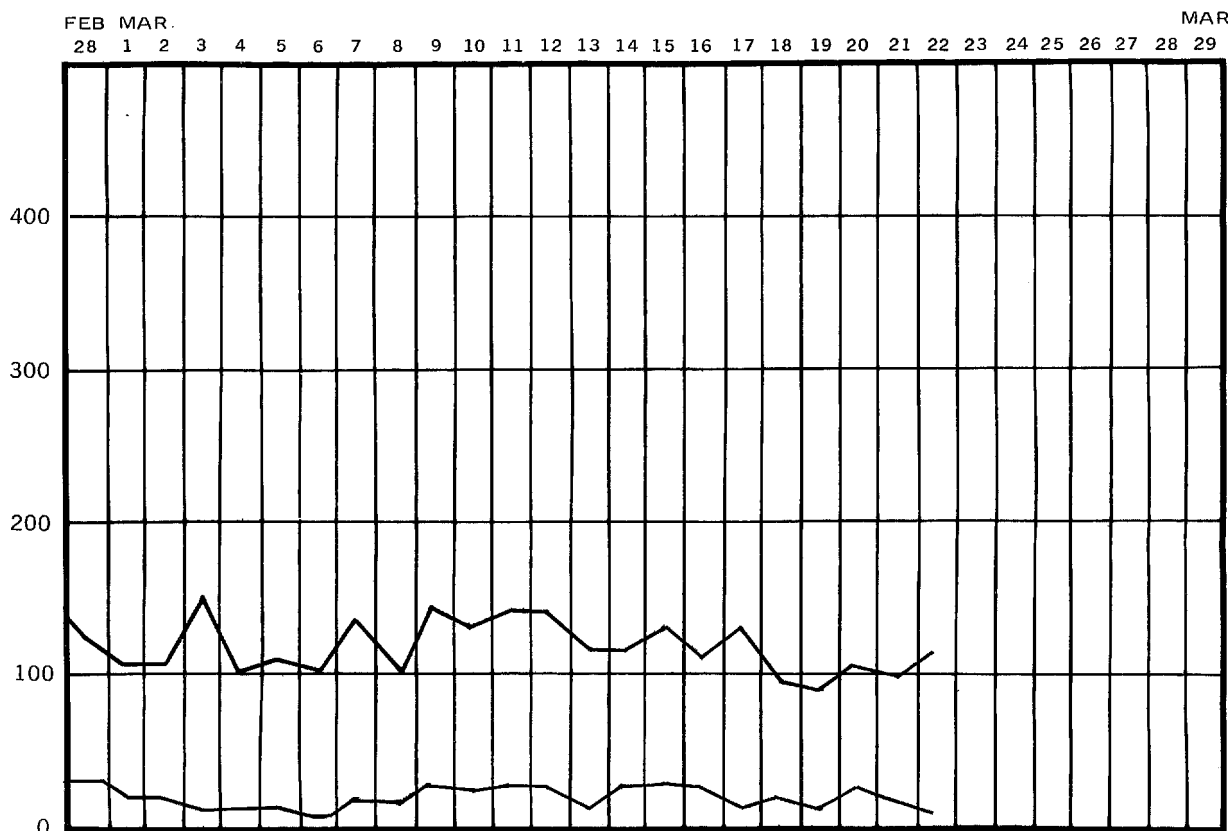
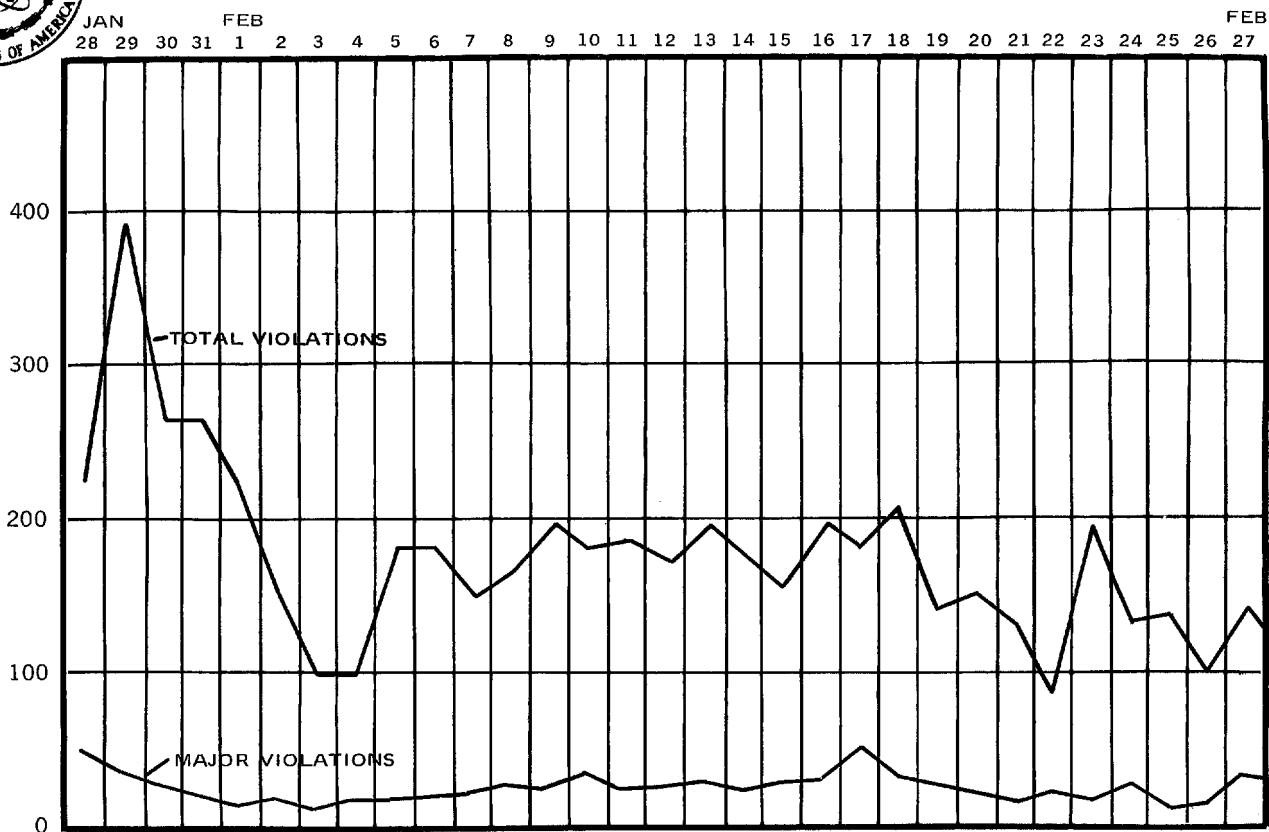
11. The following is a chronological listing of only the most significant "major" Communist violations of the ceasefire in South Vietnam that were reported by the South Vietnamese Armed Forces during the past week.

MILITARY REGION ONE

- (a) On 15 and 16 March, four miles southwest of Quang Tri City, elements of four airborne battalions received 10 enemy attacks-by-fire (ABF) totaling 489 rounds of mixed ordnance.
- (b) On 15 and 16 March, 10 miles west of Hue, elements of two ARVN infantry battalions received three enemy ABFs consisting of 682 rounds of mixed mortar fire. Two of these indirect fire attacks were followed by enemy ground assaults.
- (c) On 20 March, 4 miles south of Hue, elements of an ARVN infantry battalion received an enemy attack-by-fire (ABF) of 80 rounds of mixed 60-mm and 82-mm mortar fire followed by a ground assault.
- (d) During the period 20 and 21 March, elements of the 1st Division, west-southwest of Hue, received seven enemy attacks-by-fire (ABF) consisting of 348 rounds of ordnance. Two ABFs were followed by ground attacks.



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CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AS REPORTED BY RVNAF
(28 JANUARY 1973 TO THE PRESENT)



MILITARY REGION TWO

- (a) On 15 March, enemy forces attacked an element of an ARVN infantry battalion three miles southwest of Bong Son.
- (b) On 21 March, eight miles northwest of Kontum City, an ARVN battalion received an ABF of 100 rounds of mortar and recoilless rifle fire.

MILITARY REGION THREE

- (a) On 15 March, 11 miles east-southeast of Dau Tieng, elements of an RF company received an enemy ground attack.
- (b) On 20 and 21 March, RVNAF elements in the vicinity of Tonle Cham received three enemy ABFs consisting of 226 rounds of mixed ordnance.
- (c) On 22 March, RVNAF elements in the vicinity of Tonle Cham received two enemy attacks by fire consisting of 200 rounds of mixed ordnance.

MILITARY REGION FOUR

- (a) On 17 March, 10 miles southeast of Rach Gia, an RF battalion received an ABF of 12 rounds of mixed 60-mm mortar and B-40 rocket fire followed by a ground assault.
- (b) On 17 March, seven miles south-southwest of Soc Trang, an ABF of an unknown number of 82-mm mortar rounds impacted on an RF outpost near a pagoda.
- (c) On 18 March, 16 miles northeast of Vinh Long, an RF company received an enemy ground attack.

- (d) On 19 March, 21 miles northwest of Vinh Long, elements of an RF battalion received an ABF (unknown type and number of rounds) followed by a ground assault.
- (e) On 20 March, ARVN elements 10 miles northeast of Chau Doc received a ground attack resulting in over 100 enemy killed.

D. Combat Activity Instigated by Communist Forces In Laos During the Week from 16 Through 22 March

12. The week began with heavy North Vietnamese Army attacks in several areas in south Laos, most significantly in the vicinity of Paksong on the Bolovens Plateau and in the area between Khong Sedone and Saravane north of the Plateau. Activity in the central panhandle was heaviest in an area south of Thakhek, capital of Khammouane Province, where Communist forces are continuing to contest the Royal Lao Government presence near several heavily populated villages. The rest of Laos remained generally quiet with only light isolated incidents reported.

13. Following is a brief account of significant combat incidents which occurred between 16 and 21 March and which were clearly initiated by Communist forces in violation of the Laos ceasefire agreement:

- (a) On 16 March, North Vietnamese Army (NVA) units launched four ground attacks against Royal Lao Army forces west of Paksong on the Bolovens Plateau. In the heaviest of these attacks, an estimated NVA battalion penetrated a Government position 5 kilometers southwest of Paksong and forced the defenders to withdraw an additional 5 kilometers. On the same date, four smaller Communist-initiated attacks took place south of Thakhek in Laos MR III.

- (b) On 17 March, an NVA battalion attacked a Government battalion east of Khong Sedone in MR IV, forcing the friendly unit to withdraw several kilometers to the west. Three company-sized ground attacks and one attack-by-fire were initiated by Communist forces south of Thakhek in MR III.
- (c) On 18 March, two company-sized ground attacks and one 200 round mortar attack were launched against friendly units south of Thakhek. A Government position north of Dong Hene in MR III was also attacked by two Communist companies.
- (d) On 19 March, two Communist companies launched another ground attack and attack-by-fire south of Thakhek, forcing a Government battalion to relocate several kilometers to the west. A sharp engagement occurred in MR IV when two NVA companies forced a Government unit out of a village northeast of Khong Sedone. This village was in Government hands at the time of the cease-fire, but has changed hands three times since then.
- (e) On 20 March, the Communists launched another two-company ground attack supported by over 100 rounds of mortar fire south of Thakhek in MR III. The attack was repulsed.
- (f) On 21 March, there was no significant activity throughout Laos.
- (g) On 22 March, early reports indicate no significant activity throughout Laos.

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ANNEX IV

Definition of "Major" and "Minor" Ceasefire Violations:

Paragraph 9 of this memorandum contains a table listing the total number of Communist-inspired ceasefire violations reported by the GVN, both for the past week and for the whole period since the ceasefire became effective on 28 January. The determination of whether a violation is "major" or "minor" is based on the following criteria, which have been established by the U.S. Department of Defense.

Major Violation: One in which US/friendly forces, facilities or population centers:

- Receive numerous rounds of enemy mortar, artillery, or rocket fire within a short period of time or sporadically over a period of hours.
- Receive a multi-company (150-400 men) ground attack with or without supporting fire.
- Are subjected to one or more acts of terrorism involving extensive use of mines and demolitions.

Minor Violation: One in which US/friendly forces, facilities or population centers:

- Receive one or a very few rounds of enemy mortar, artillery, rocket, or small arms fire following an extended period during which no stand-off attacks-by-fire were received.
- Receive a small ground probe, unsupported by significant mortar, artillery, or

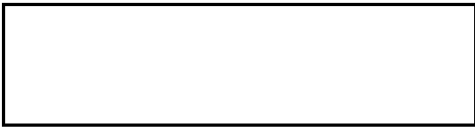
rocket fire, following an extended period during which no attacks of this type were received.

-Are subjected to one or a very few small terrorist attacks involving use of mines and demolitions following an extended period during which no attacks of this type were received.

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